

THE ISNEG LIFE CYCLE

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After the death of one of their relatives, the Isneg also *lapatán* or taboo some of the coconut trees that belonged to the deceased. Such trees are easily recognizable, as one always finds a certain quantity of strips of bamboo or of thorny branches or of both, tied all around the tree, at the height of one's shoulders. I know of a couple of Iloko teachers who, knowing nothing about this custom, climbed a tabooed coconut tree, in order to drop down some of the fruits and eat them; unfortunately they were caught by the owners and got free only after the payment of a heavy fine. If they had been natives of the district, they would not have escaped so easily, although I doubt very much if an Isneg would ever dare break such a taboo.

Coconuts that have been gathered at the time of the owner's death are also declared taboo, and nobody is allowed to partake of them until the time of the *obóbát*; if no such ceremony takes place (which must be a rare contingency) the fruits are left to decay. At the time of the *obóbát*, however, they are declared *inúkas* or free, and everybody is allowed to consume them.

The following are the *lapát* or taboos that have to do with fishing:

1. It is usually forbidden to catch fish in that part of the river or brook that passes near the settlement in which a person died. This taboo is lifted only at the time of the *obóbát*. The tabooed section, which is said to be *mabalsiyán*, is marked off at both ends by green leafy canes of bamboo grass (*Miscanthus sinensis*) stuck in the bottom of the river or brook.

2. If the relatives of the deceased claim the exclusive right of fishing in a certain part of a river or brook, this section or *anówan* remains tabooed until the *obóbát* or completion of the mourning period.

It is forbidden to work on two days, namely on the second day after the funeral, the *taribukáy*, and on the day following the *obóbát* ceremony. This obligatory rest is called *úlin*, and any work done on such a day is considered useless and inevitably subject to being completely spoiled.

A widow or widower is forbidden to visit the relatives of the deceased husband or wife for the whole period that elapses between burial and *obóbát*. Infringement of this taboo would cause the whole body of the culprit to swell up. The same punishment would be inflicted on a widow or widower who would dare eat mushrooms (*óon*) or *úbud* (young shoots of some palm trees, as the *anibón* or fishtail palm, etc.).

249 Urged on not only by their offspring, but also by their own appetite, frequently cut down (*magtaggád*) one or more canes, which, divided (*tagtaggán*) into sections (*ántdt*), are peeled by eager teeth and sucked by greedy mouths. To cut *unát* for the purpose of sucking out its juice is called *mambó*: this is never said of cutting something else or of cutting sugar cane for other purposes.

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784 Sugar cane at which a wild cat (*minúaw*) has been gnawing, and hence called *minúñaw*, must not be sucked by married persons, especially when they have children. This taboo, however, does not extend to the other canes of the same plantation, nor to those that have been attacked by wild boars. A bunch (*búlig*) of bananas that has become *minúñaw* is tabooed in the same way, but, in this case, the whole bunch is tabooed, even though most of its fruits have escaped injury.

249 When the whole plantation has reached maturity (*taxunát*), the men go to the field and gather the crop (*manaxunát*), cutting the stalks one by one at the base, by means of a hatchet (*alirá*).

482 All canes that are to be brought to the mill, are trimmed in such a way as to be all of the same length, and then bound into huge bundles. A pole (*alidugdúg*) is inserted into each bundle, to which it is tied in at least two places: this pole prevents the *unát* from moving to and fro and from protruding in all directions, when they are carried on the shoulders.

The aftermath of sugar cane (*pulpúl*) is left untouched until it has to make room for something else that will be planted in the same place.

5. BANANAS

245 Among the many varieties of bananas (*báxat*) that are cultivated by the Isneg, the following should be mentioned:

The *baláyañ* or *sabó* (*Musa sapientum*, L., var. *compressa*, Blanco): Skin thick, yellow; flattish; eaten raw or cooked; stalk tall.

The *baráñan* (var. *lacatan*, Blanco): Skin thick, yellow; meat yellow, fragrant; one of the most esteemed bananas.

The *binañá* (var. *cinerea*, Blanco): Skin thin, yellow; very much esteemed; setting the teeth on edge when not entirely ripe.

The *dokkasí*: Fruits very close together, as if bound into a tight package.

The *rubáw*: Skin thin, yellow; small; not much esteemed.

The *xáyud* or *laxáyud* (var. *suaveolens*, Blanco): Skin thick, greenish; meat fragrant.

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The *kozamán* or *ko-kozamán*: Skin thick, yellow; very large; 245
eaten only when roasted.

The *lippokán*: Skin thin, greenish; very small, oval.

The *liwliwág* or *uliwag*: Skin thin, red; small, elongated, a little curved; meat reddish; stalk short, purple.

The *paiydán*: Skin thick; very large, elongated; not much esteemed.

The *papuyán*: Skin thick, yellow; meat yellow, more or less sour.

The *parandn*: Skin thick, yellow; rather large; bunches very large; stalk very tall; leaves very large; not much esteemed.

The *sára*: Skin thin, purple; fruits considerably curved inwards; stalk purple.

The *tarakíta*:- Skin thick, yellow; small; eaten only when cooked.

The *tokkiyán*: Skin thin, yellow; small; not much esteemed.

The *toón*: Skin thin, yellow; resembling the *baránan*, but larger; stalk very short.

To plant bananas, the Isneg remove (*magsí*) the suckers (*así*) that grow at the base of older plants, and merely transplant them at a distance of about ten feet from one another. The dry season should be chosen for this kind of work, because bananas transplanted at that time bear thick, fleshy fruits (*bilaltág*), while banana suckers transplanted in the rainy season usually bear only small, thin fruits (*xararpát*).

After one year a transplanted banana bears its fruit and has a few young suckers growing at its base. The top (*píso*, "heart", or *píso báxat*) of the bunch or cluster of flowers never opens. The natives cut it off (*maxipíso*) and use the young flower buds for vegetables. 262

The bunch of fruits (*búlig*)⁷⁵ is cut (*mañbág*, *tagán*) before the bananas are ripe enough to be eaten (when they are still *dupát*); therefore it has to be hung in the house (*mañlúto*) until the fruits are completely ripe (*nalúto*). Sometimes the hands (*sápad*; one hand: *tañasápad*) are separated (*magsápad*) from the bunch or *búlig* in order to lessen the difficulty of handling them. 251

To soften them more quickly the Isneg occasionally thrust single bananas (*dupát*) under the fire or in the ashes of the hearth. Bananas and sweet potatoes that have undergone this treatment are both called *linoóm*. 252

Fruits (bananas, papayas, etc.) that are nearly ripe, are called *sidarán*; when they are completely ripe, they are said to be *nalúto*. 245

⁷⁵ One bunch: *tañabúlig*; *nibbubúlig*: bearing many fruits.

251 Young banana leaves (*adón*) are used very extensively for wrapping
245 purposes, especially when things have to be kept fresh, for instance
cooked rice, several kinds of viands, etc.

The men cut down (*lappadán*, *maglappád*) the leaves with the *alivá*
(hatchet) and gather (*manaxidón*) them.

Dry banana leaves (*arupát*) are used for wrapping all kinds of
small objects.

245 A banana plantation where the leaves are all withered, is supposed
776 to be the abode of the spirit *Alérán*. For the rest, no harm is done.
as she never attempts to destroy the fruits.

6. YAMS

244 The origin of yams or *úbi* (*Dioscorea alata*, L., *D. pentaphylla*, L.,
973 etc.) is authenticated among the Isneg by the following stories:
539 Ucil from Boio (O dialect, Main branch) told me this:
824

Ya nonónná nía úbi

The first yam

*Kító inumbét dató dódon kiddi itó nōnná nía alxáw áwánda kanó
nía anán dató tóláy ta aminán dató dódon. / Kané áwánda nía anán
kító maminda nía natáy ináru-da ya anáná-dó sáda nía anán áy
imúlada to tabbit nató ababbiú. / Áy to ya nagbalín ka úbi to ya
nonónná nía úbi.*

When the locusts came here in former days, the people, it is said,
had nothing to eat, as the locusts consumed everything. And when
they had nothing to eat, so they would all be dead, they took out a
part of their children's bodies, and they ate it, and they planted the
flesh of the child. And that became a yam: that is the first yam.

Another man related to me a similar story with reference to the
paddig-yam: it is very large, and its skin is very red; it looks as if
it were bleeding. On a certain day, a mother took her babe as soon
as it was born and cut it into pieces, which she buried in the ground.
After a while they grew, and when the woman dug them up, they had
become *paddig*-yams. She cooked them, ate them, and found them
to be a savory kind of food.

A different story is woven around the *dinampáyán*, a kind of *lo-tó*
(*Dioscorea fasciculata*, Roxb. and *D. aculeata*, L.). The *lo-tó* are
small yams, whose meat is yellowish or white and very soft; their
skin is thin and whitish or brown, and is easily peeled off when cooked;
their vines and leaves are thorny. Formerly all *lo-tó* were soft

249 (magkaskás) from the *agdërâyân*-pole and then piled up (*magsaldít*) somewhere on the floor of the house, next to the wall, where they are left to cure. To keep the bulk (*saldít*) of tobacco leaves in place, a stick is fixed somewhere in the floor, and the bulk of tobacco finds its place between this stick on one side and the wall of the house on the other.

249 While the tobacco is curing, the men prepare (*mañolapí*) boxes
415 (*kolapí*) for the final storage. These *kolapí*, which are as high as
they are long and very narrow, are made from the bark of one or more
314 of the following trees:

The *adaán*, a forest tree with large leaves.

The *ánut*, a forest tree whose timber is not much esteemed.

The *labdó*, mentioned before, when treating sugar cane.

Before storing (*ipintá-*) the hands of tobacco in the *kolapí*, the Isneg spread some *bánây*-leaves on the bottom, to serve as a pad (*annáp*) and to cause the leaves to become red. The *bánây* is a very tall zingiberaceous plant with white flowers and grows in thickets of bamboo grass and in waste places.

To cause the tobacco to appear very valuable to prospective buyers, some *taróyog* are mixed with the leaves stored in the *kolapí* (box). The *taróyog* is a low herb that grows in forested areas.

V. THE ISNEG ORCHARD

- 245 The Isneg have no idea of a real orchard as we understand it. Nevertheless there is no village, almost no house, where they have not at least a few coco palms growing on the grounds, which surround the house yard or the group of houses that constitute a village. To people who walk along a mountain path or paddle down a river on a canoe or a raft, these coco palms are very often visible from a great distance and are the surest sign of the actual or former existence of one or more habitations in their immediate neighborhood.

All fruit trees planted by the Isneg are to be found on the grounds just mentioned, but there is none more precious and more important to the inhabitants of Apayaw than the universally cultivated coco palm or *iyúg*.

245 As to the question of its introduction into Apayaw, let us listen to
824 what *Lampá* from Dangla (O dialect, Main branch) has to tell us
539 about it:

Naggáyatán náyá iyúg
Origin of the coconut

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To nōnná ná alzáw áy nagdallis nalnáp námin to alawazán nám 245
 áwán piám maiyúg kid apáyaw, / nám áy ránná la uwód da iyúg ga 224
 nillód. / Nasinán dató tóláy éluxánda ná totó nám bakkánda namála. 539
 Nasinán din to kusá sinaluzánna séna iddán kadató tóláy séda imúla.
 Tówin ya naggáyatán námin ná iyúg. / Nám xapó ta ipaandái dáyá
 kusá to nañald-da kitó nagdallisna kitó nōnná ná alzáw séno atán ya
 mañallód ónó mañirád miñirañiráv dáyá kusá mazáwáгда ka iyúg.

In former days the whole world was covered with a flood, but no coconuts were yet produced in Apayaw, / but it happened that there was a coconut that floated down. / The men saw it, they really desired it, but they did not get it. / A cat saw it then, it got it swimming, then gives it to the men, then they plant it. / That is the origin of all the coconuts. / But, because the cats managed to take it out of the flood in former days, when somebody causes [coconuts] to float down or scrapes out coconut meat, the cats mew, they call the coconuts.

When somebody intends to plant coconuts, the first thing he has to 245
 do is to climb one or more of the trees and to detach (*mamúxát*, *buzátan*) a certain amount of ripe nuts (*iyúg*), which are dropped on the ground and afterwards picked up; cracked ones of course are useless for this purpose. A man who has been roasting meat should [284]
 abstain from gathering nuts (*manuxúnug*) for some time, lest the trees that grow from these nuts produce nothing else but fruits that wither before they are grown to maturity.

The nuts (*patúbo*) are tied without ado to a pole that has been stuck somewhere in or near the house yard, in order to cause them to sprout (*mañárdy* or *magpaárdy*). There are very few houses in Apayaw in whose immediate neighborhood there is not to be found such a pole with its heap of dry coconuts. Here they are left until the shoots have attained a certain development and they are ready to be planted.

The meat of sprouting nuts (*árdy*) that are in their first stage [262]
 namely before the shell has been pierced, consists of a white spongy mass (*tobál*) that fills the whole nut and is considered as a great dainty.

To plant coconuts (*magtubán*) the Isneg men dig holes in the ground, at a distance of at least fifteen feet (*dapán*) from one another. Then the man who does the actual planting proceeds in the following way:

First he loosens his G-string, because
nezát ya abág séno nasulít a bunután

245

nakurkuráy ya abág seno nalapát a bunútán

let the G-string be tight and it will be hard to unhusk [the nuts],
let the G-string be loose and it will be easy to unhusk [the nuts];

then he takes somebody on his back:

marabbáy ya magmúla séno adú ya bisí-na

let the planter carry somebody on the back and its fruits will
be many;

and finally he places the *aráy* (sprouting nut) in the hole without
dropping his load.

In some districts, both men and women are allowed to plant coco-
nuts and, instead of carrying a person, they merely encircle somebody's
knees with one arm, while they use the other hand to drop the nut
into the hole.

It takes a young coco palm (*tubán*, so called even when it starts
bearing fruit) some ten years before it bears fruit, but after that it
never stops: as soon as the nuts are ripening, a fresh raceme of flowers
(*buráyo-*), is produced.

A good many of the *bubulitañ* (very young fruits) drop down before
they reach a diameter of five inches; but there is always a sufficient
number of them that finish their stages from *apápa* (before any meat
has formed inside) to *sipañ*, and from *sipañ* (healthy young nut) to
full growth.

In order to prevent the nuts from being stolen, *añisít* is placed in
the coconut grove: it causes the man who dares to climb a tree without
permission, to fall down without having attained his object. The
añisít is a low herb that grows on damp rocks.

The generality of the nuts are *bató*, that is, their meat is hard when
it is fully ripe. Occasionally you may find a *lúpug*, a nut whose meat
always remains soft; but, if you look up and examine the nuts before
you climb a tree, you will never be able to come upon a *lúpug*. The
meat of these *lúpug* is very much esteemed, and besides, when con-
sumed by a deaf person, it cures him.

It requires more than a little dexterity to tear off the husk (*bunút*)
of a coconut, whether green (*dapidáp*) or dry, and people who are
not used to it, can hardly expect to do it, even though they have the
best possible hatchet at their disposal.

Coconuts are usually tied to one another two by two by means of
a part of the husk that has been partially torn loose from both. Two
pairs of coconuts form one *sipúl* (*tañasipúl*).

The tawny nestlike appendages situated at the base of the leaf of ²⁴⁵ the coco palm, are called *appit*.

Among the several varieties of *iyúg*, two are especially remarkable:

The *xana-nát*: It is very much esteemed; its nuts contain abundant milk and their meat remains comparatively soft even when completely ripe.

The *pokópo-* or *parópo-*: Its fruits are rarely numerous, and they can generally be reached without climbing the tree, as the latter never grows very tall.

Besides the coco palm, the Isneg cultivate many other fruit trees, ²⁴⁵ usually on the same grounds. These are of much less importance, ⁸²⁴ however, than the coco palm, and so I shall merely enumerate them and add a few details whenever necessary or advisable.

The *tumbán* or *dommón* (*Citrus decumana*, Murr.), pomelo.

The *kuttáy* (*Citrus aurantium*, L.), orange.

The *kakíl* (from the Spanish *cajel*, "a kind of orange") or *arañxita* (from the Spanish *naranjita*, "small orange"), a variety of small orange.

The *alolonsit*, *kalomansi*, *kalamansit* (none of them genuine Isneg terms) or *daldáyap ári* (literally: king's *daldáyap*), (*Citrus mitis*, Blanco): A variety of lime, yellow when ripe.

The *balás* or *daldáyap* (*Citrus lima*, Lunan), a small variety of lemon.

The *usiwa*, a small variety of lemon, larger than the *daldáyap*; yellow when ripe.

The *aroñronót*, a variety of lemon, as large as a small orange, with very rough peel, yellow when ripe.

The *ximná*, a variety of very large citron, more or less globose, yellow when ripe.

The *paká-* (*Artocarpus communis*, Forst.), breadfruit.

The *ananiká* (*Artocarpus integrifolia*, L.f.), jack.

The *mañgá* or *amañgá* (*Mangifera indica*, L.), mango.

The *kardowélas* (from the Spanish *ciruela*, "plum"), (*Spondias purpurea*, L.), *ciruela*, a plumlike fruit.

The *kapáya* (*Carica papaya*, L.), papaya or papaw.

The *kambóy* or *loñbóy* (*Eugenia jambolana*, Lam.), Java plum or jambool. The infusion obtained from its bark is drunk as a remedy for dysentery.

The *makópa* (*Diospyros discolor*, Willd.), mabolo. Fruit globose, fleshy, densely covered with hairs; stones two.

245 The *santól* or *santór* (*Sandoricum koetjape* [Burm.f.] Merr.), sandal tree. Fruit globose, yellowish; pericarp thick; seeds large, surrounded by a soft, translucent or pale, edible, acid pulp.

The *piydt* (*Averrhoa bilimbi*, L.). Its acid fruit is edible and much used for condiments.

The *ulilib*, growing wild and occasionally cultivated: A large tree, whose edible fruits, when ripe, consist in a yellow drupe, the size of a small tomato (globose variety), and contain two stones.

The Isneg have several ways of gathering fruits from a tree. Whenever possible of course they simply pick them from below; otherwise they either climb the tree or shake it (*xoyyowán* or *yagyaggán*). Sometimes they use a *raxúd*, a stick or bamboo provided with a hook, whether natural or artificial, in order to detach the fruits (*magdo-dó-*) and cause them to drop down. Finally they get some fruits by throwing a stick through the crown of a tree.

Fruits are gathered in the same way, whether one or more are picked (*magpannát*) for present use, or all of them are harvested at once (*magdakná-*).

A fruit that has been overlooked and is left on the tree is called a *kátat*.

VI. OTHER PLANTS

Here follows a list of trees, shrubs and herbs that are cultivated by the Isneg and have been omitted in the preceding treatment of the garden and the orchard. Most of them are planted somewhere at the outskirts of the village or around the house yard, like the coco palm and other fruit trees; but I thought it better to treat them separately, because, either they are not trees at all, or else they could hardly be counted as fruit trees in the strict sense of the word. Some of the herbs are found occasionally in the *kadánan* (garden), but this is rather exceptional.

Cultivated for culinary purposes

241 The *maróngáy* (*Moringa oleifera*, Lam.), horse-radish tree. Its leaves and fruits are used for vegetables.

262 The *katúdáy* or *kasúdáy* (*Sesbania grandiflora* [L.] Pers.). Flowers and pods are used for vegetables.

[263] The *salamági* (*Tamarindus indica*, L.), tamarind. Its pods are used for condiments.

The vegetables may be: tomatoes, egg-plants, squash, peppers, corn, beans, camote, gabi, or yams. Fruits may be: bananas, coconuts, pineapples, jack fruit, oranges, lemons, guavas, melons, lucban, mangoes, or papaya. The beverages may be: coffee, cocoa, or water. Honey is included in the diet. From sugar cane are produced candied fruits and vegetables, molasses, basi, and vinegar. A strong tobacco is raised and smoked—sometimes in a small pipe; but generally one leaf is rolled into a small cigar. Both men and women smoke. Boys and girls start smoking at an early age. 262 [244] 245 [272] 263 276

In growing these things, the people do not use irrigation; but follow the *kaiñgin* method of farming. A suitable piece of wild land is selected. The vegetation is cut down, allowed to dry, and then burnt. Seeds are planted in the ashen earth by making a hole with a sharp stick and dropping a seed in it. The plot is enclosed with a bamboo fence. The men clear and fence the land, while the women do much of the rest of the work. In two years the soil has become leached and packed by the heavy tropical rains and so sterile that a new *kaiñgin* is made elsewhere. 311 241 [312] 417 462

The rice is an upland variety which does not require much water. The seeds are planted during the beginning of the rainy season in April and May. When ripe, the heads are cut off by hand, using a miniature *aliwa*. These heads are gathered into bundles, tied, and then stored in a specially built square granary whose architectural design follows that of the house. Tobacco and vegetables are usually planted during January after the harvest, in the *kaiñgins* where rice was grown. 243 [251] 343 249 244

When the woman wishes some rice to cook, she threshes several bundles on a mat or skin with a club;